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ABSTRACT

Articles collected in this journal examine the phenomenon of listening, and define listening skills essential for teachers and students in the fields of speech and theater. Included are "Your Subject--My Business," an examination of teaching priorities in the area of oral communication; "Swing Your Spirit to Sound: Listening Assertively in the Classroom"; "How Do We Know?" an analysis of issues in measuring listening behaviors; "An Observation of Some Inconsistencies in the Brown-Carlsen Listening Test"; "Listening: Is It in the Person or in the Message"; "Cross-Cultural Communication and Effective Listening"; "A Receiver Based Approach to the Basic Speech Course"; and "An Editorial Statement on the Teaching of Listening." (KS)

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. . . FROM THE EDITOR

As your Editor, I want to publish those manuscripts which will best help us improve as teachers of Speech & Theatre. As teachers, we continue to learn and yet rarely do we communicate what we have learned with others. Part of the problem, I believe, is that the journals of the State Speech & Theatre Associations have tried to model themselves on the journals of our National and Regional Associations. A quality essay, appropriate for such journals, should be published in them. A quality essay written to help us become better teachers, I believe, should be published in journals such as ours.

Just as this issue of the *Journal* has as its specific focus the teaching of listening, subsequent issues will focus on the teaching of rhetorical criticism, on the teaching of theatre, on the teaching of debate, on the teaching of mass communication. If, as a teacher, you have learned how to better teach these subjects then you owe it to the rest of us to share what you have learned. If you are more comfortable writing in the first person, then by all means do so. As Editor, I will judge manuscripts on the basis of two standards. Do they fit the special focus for any of the issues yet to be published under my editorship? Is it likely that they will help us become better teachers?

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YOUR SUBJECT—MY BUSINESS

BOB HARDY

The theme of your convention is "Speech's Quest For Identity." My contribution to your effort will be to offer some thoughts about priorities. Your field of study is oral communication and I see that as including speaking and listening. Cool Hand Luke, in identifying a problem, said, "What we have here is a failure to communicate!" The public sees your work as teaching students to speak efficiently and clearly. The need for skill in speaking has not diminished, but a lack of skill in listening should be our number one concern. We should make teaching students to listen—not just to hear,—to listen—a first priority.

The inability of Americans to listen is emerging as a frightening problem that our society is making no move to correct; it is simply adjusting to it. I think that's what the new campaign expenditure law is all about. The smart boys realized how to win; they have learned to peddle their candidates like so much soap; package them pretty and they'll win. The image makers don't worry enough about the quality of the product; they're concerned about how the product is merchandised. Persuasive campaigns mean big bundles of money for T.V. ads, radio ads, and ads for the print media. So the guy with the most money to spend gets elected. Nobody has corrected that. Not enough people have said, "Let's learn to pick the candidates on what they say and what they do; let's teach skill in listening as a basic part of decision-making." No, we're not focusing on correcting the problem; we simply look for an easy way to adjust. They put a limit on spending and figure that'll take care of campaign abuses. That'll protect the people from themselves and the big bad money guys. Well, it'll take care of the big ad campaigns true enough, but it does precious little to inform the voter, to teach him how to decide, to jolt him out of his apathy and get him to listen and to think. This adjustment deceives people into believing they are informed and, at the same time, continues the tradition of election by minority and lowers popular participation even more. This is an example of how we adjust to the problem rather than correcting it.

When the listening segment of oral communication is gone, it's a simple matter to persuade. When people don't listen, they react, and conditioned reaction is what mass communication is all about these days. We've become a society that talks at, not to, people. And, as should be expected, we have

become a society that hears but does not listen. That's why the impact of mass communication is so damnably unnerving to some of us. We're dealing with hearers—not listeners. Those who wish to determine how you will think, what your attitude will be, and how you will act can make use of our non-listening for good and bad alike. Image-making is easy, once conditioning is achieved, and conditioning is a snap when people only hear but don't listen.

A clear example of conditioning is the general negativism that has swept this land in the last decade. Even when things are good, we're made to feel guilty about it. So conditioned, we find that nothing is right and that everyone and everything are to be viewed with suspicion and cynicism. Being cynical is "in." That's being "sophisticated!"

If you'll take the four essential elements of good journalism—ACCURACY, FAIRNESS, BALANCE, AND CONTEXT—and apply them to this popular cynicism today, you'll see what happens when people hear but don't listen. I intend to show that what we are today is largely the result of sometimes less-than-accurate, hardly fair, mostly unbalanced, and often-times out-of-context statements that gain fantastic credibility simply because we've come to accept every challenge to traditional values as being right and every support of traditional values as being suspect.

Negativism is no longer just fashionable in this country, it's a way of life. We are told to hang our heads in shame for what we've been in the past, take all the verbal abuse handed out by sensational fault finders like an adult, then shape up and adjust to the new, more modern, more "relevant" world in which we live. I would submit to you that what we've been in the past has brought us most of the greatness we share today. Aren't you just a little tired of hearing about the new, free-swinging society we live in? Have you really concluded that the magazines, books, movies, T.V. shows, and hit records filled with stories of free-love, mate swapping, communal sex, freakies have been or ever will be the cause of any American greatness?

A visitor from Mars couldn't help but get the idea that we are as we are pictured in x-rated movies, pornographic publications, and music praising the glories of drug abuse. Yet these are anti-social things for most of us. These are outside our lives. A person who hears the stories and reads the articles about the new morality of this age without listening and thinking may not realize that they're provided for shock value so that you'll become conditioned and then buy the product. The problem is that so many are beginning to believe that anti-social behavior is a positive position and cynicism a progressive attitude. Tell a story long enough and often enough, and it begins to gain credence. Truth has little to do with it. Fact has nothing to do with it. Conditioning through emphasis has everything to do with it. It's the overemphasis on negativism that deserves some spotlighting, some discussion, some accuracy, fairness, balance, and context.

Because we do not listen, context is something we lack badly in communicating to the masses. Consider the mass communications concerning the state of our economy. We're in bad shape we are told. Inflation, first, then recession, and probably depression are wiping us out. You've heard it over and over again. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. The news stories of the day, every day, reflect those two extremes—the rich with their

tax loopholes and the poor on their fixed incomes. Well, what about the rest of us who don't fit those two categories, who make up the far greater proportion of the population? Let's get the picture into context. Sure, we've been affected by inflation, but that's not the whole story, not by a damned sight. We've got higher wages now than ever before, and even with inflation, our buying power today is just about where it has always been. If you have been listening and if you put the whole thing into context, you'll note that though inflation is high, so too is our standard of living.

No, I'm not going to hit you with figures and percentages and statistics. Leave that to the experts. I'll make the point with simple, everyday observations. When did you last see someone pushing a reel-type lawnmower? Where in your neighborhood is the closest one-car family? How many sixteen year olds do you know who own cars and how many nineteen and twenty year olds do you know who have apartments? How many radios and T.V.s do you have in your home? What kind of a vacation did you take last year? How many things do you own? How many things do you own that go to make up your standard of living? That's context.

We are disturbed about the high cost of food today and about how much our weekly bill is at the grocery store. Yet to be fair, another of those prerequisites, we should point out that we Americans still pay a smaller percentage of our earnings for food than any industrialized nation in the world and we get a far more nutritional diet than anyone anywhere. That's fairness.

If we add still another journalistic necessity, accuracy, we'll see things more clearly. Looking over your next grocery bill, separate the food from it, and see what's left. How much booze, shampoo, hairspray, deodorant, shaving lotion, dogmeal, tobacco, cigarettes, pantyhose, cosmetics, and other non-edible goodies were included? These are grocery store bills not food bills. There is a difference and you know it as well as I do.

It's not hard to be negative, to throw up our hands and say, "What on earth is happening?" A recitation of the day's events almost dictates that kind of reaction. But try a little balance, another of these reportorial essentials. Surely, a lot of people take drugs, but most of us do not. Some people steal, but most of us are above stealing. Granted, crime, bigotry, poverty, and corruption are around us, but most of us are not guilty. I refuse to accept the simplistic, broad-brush accusation of Americans. Just because we're Americans doesn't make us responsible for all the ills in our society. Just maybe we ought to start looking at the positive side of this society at the same time we are scanning the negative elements. Just maybe we ought to stop concentrating so heavily on two extremes and following so closely those who have learned to hold our attention with their unbalanced sensationalism. There are far more good people doing for themselves what should be done than we ever seem to consider these days. When one seeks a balanced view, he cannot escape that conclusion.

A drug-crazed kid knocks down a little old lady and steals her purse. That doesn't mean every teenager with long hair is a mugger. A politician or cop takes a bribe. That doesn't mean all political figures and all cops are crooked. A businessman cheats on his income tax. That doesn't mean all

business is bad. Yet, we fall into the negativist's trap. From a few such instances we make that giant inductive leap to an overall generalization and that general conclusion then somehow becomes our gospel. The bad thing is that the generalization is almost always negative; the sad thing is that it's so often inaccurate. We're surly, suspicious, polarized, and unmindfully critical. We see little good in anyone or anything.

Boy, do we pity us. That's what's so untypical of Americans. We've had it tough before, but the kind of self-staged wake we are now experiencing is absolutely unparalleled in our history. Every new bit of negativism, every new challenge to tradition, every new seed of discontent that comes along finds an ever increasingly fertile field to grow in. Look at what has happened. We've had five recessions in 25 years, each ending with a better standard of living for more Americans than the last. Somebody had to pay for the ten years of guns and butter in Vietnam, with a daily cost of millions of dollars. Yes, the economy's in a rotten shape; we put it there. Now, how much are we sacrificing to put it back in order? Are we cutting down drastically on our use of high-priced gasoline? Are we cutting down on our wasteful use of food? No, we've gotten used to the good life, and as long as we can afford it, we'll pay for it and bemoan our pitiful state as we do so. You see we have a world market now, rather than a closed trading community. We have more people working now than ever before. We are earning more than ever before. Most Americans are living useful, happy lives, but if you focus only on the extremes you'd not be aware of that.

What happened to my thesis about our learning to listen? I'm still on that theme. I've been reviewing the impact of the mass media on our lives, culture, and values. The sharpies found that we don't know how to listen and in their greed they have used us badly. Mass media has built an army of potheads. It began with the music. When was the last time you listened to the lyrics of the rock music of the last ten years? When have you really listened? They glorify drugs, sex, and violence. "Up, up and away in my beautiful balloon"—Do you know what that meant in the kids' vernacular at the time? TWA liked that song so much that they built an ad campaign on it. Try really listening to such hits of the 1960's as "*L*ucy in the *S*ky with *D*iamonds" or "The Magic Carpet Ride." These are just a few tiny examples. Television crews started covering protest meetings, to the point that a group would call the news departments and tell of a spontaneous demonstration that would occur at two o'clock in the afternoon. How many times have you said, "Why do they always focus on the ten demonstrators and not on the two thousand in attendance?" When I covered both political conventions in Miami Beach in 1972, I found that the crews spent more time filming the protesters than they did the participants. This too is a tiny example.

Television's nightime schedule gives you the best indication of values. Look at the mentality level they program to. Situation comedies with easily predictable story lines are run over and over again. We are letting television programmers dictate the level of material we consume. Someone's ratings show that a large group of listeners prefer a certain mentality level and everyone is pulled down to that level if they watch television. Through the media we're urged to indulge ourselves in consuming. We are conditioned by

such brilliant creations as the Marlboro Man and his horse and panorama. That campaign turned a sorry-selling "women's" cigarette into one of the most widely smoked cigarettes in history. Busch uses fancy film work to sell its beer. Ford cuts diamonds in its back seat. It is sad to note how successful these appeals have been. It is a little unsettling to realize that we can be manipulated so easily.

You teach communication. Can you look in your lesson guide and show me where you are making students aware of the image-making, the preconditioning, the making ready for acceptance that is being performed so expertly through the media? Abortion, so unacceptable as a socially-guaranteed "right" just five years ago, is now respectable. Who gave it respectability? Pornography, held in disrespect a short time ago, is now acceptable. Who gave that acceptability? Legalized marijuana, anti-hero worship, birth-control devices for kids, methadon maintenance for addicts all have followed the same path. Some protested that it is their civil right, their social right, their Constitutional right to have these things. Why is it right now when it was so abhorrent before? Can you tell me we are better, more wise, stronger, more moral, healthier, more respectful of others' rights and needs because we gave these things respectability? Who did the conditioning? Who made it all respectable? Look at your media, my friend.

Why was it so easy to make such changes? It was easy because people don't listen; they don't really listen. Where do we fit in to this problem? You're the teachers and I'm in the mass media. What are we going to do about it? Communication is your subject. It's my business and I'm damned frightened.

SWING YOUR SPIRIT TO SOUND: LISTENING ASSERTIVELY IN THE CLASSROOM

BAXTER M. GEETING
with
CORINNE GEETING

Over many years of teaching theater arts and speech communication, I have taken to my classes a small, yellowed volume published in the early '30's. It is *Acting–The First Six Lessons* by Richard Boleslavsky, a marvelous actor, director, and teacher whose early training was with the Moscow Art Theatre, and who later came to America and produced plays, musicals and movies from Broadway to Hollywood.

The little book opens almost automatically to page 22.

Here, *The Creature,* an aspiring young actress, confronts the Teacher. She asks how she can start to "concentrate on something materially imperceptible" which he has said is the soul of acting and which leads to the inventing of emotions.

The Teacher tells her she must start "not from a Chopin Nocturne but from the simplest scales . . . your five senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. . . ."

The Creature responds: "I hope you don't mean to say that I don't even know how to listen. . . ."

"In life you may know. Nature has taught you a little. . . ." the Teacher assures her. But he insists she do the problem he assigns. He says, "Listen to the scratching of a mouse in that corner."

The Creature looks helpless, turns her right and then her left ear, but gives no evidence of hearing the mouse.

The Teacher then asks her to "please listen to a symphony orchestra playing the march from *Aida.*"

The Creature tries again, but understands something is very wrong. She awaits the Teacher's verdict.

"I see you recognize how helpless you are," he says (before the days of Women's Lib!) "Not only do you not know how to create complicated feelings and emotions but you do not even possess your own senses. All of that you must learn by . . . daily exercises of which I can give you thousands."

But his next words are the ones I throw out to all teachers of speech and

theatre arts who may be reading this article. Boleslavsky (the Teacher) adds, ". . . If you think, you will be able to invent another thousand."

Yes. If you think, you, dear teacher, will be able to invent another thousand exercises, classroom projects and motivations for the teaching of listening, particularly as it relates to classes in speech and theatre. To be very honest, research does not turn up much in the way of rich resources ready-made for the teacher in these areas.

As Theodore H. Wright said in a discussion of learning to listen, "A Teacher's or a Student's Problem?" which appeared in the *Phi Delta Kappan* (June, 1971), "Listening is a technical skill which remains a gem in the rough in our formal educational system. Behind our widespread inability to listen lies a major oversight in our system of classroom instruction. We have . . . almost completely ignored the skill of listening."

Quite a bit of attention has been concentrated on Why Johnny Can't Read or Write. Both deficiencies have been analyzed and researched to some degree, especially in the lower grades.

But not much alarm has been sounded over Why Johnny Can't Speak or Act, and those of us who have observed Johnny's development in these areas either on the high school or collegiate level know of his limitations in both.

The fact that many studies have confirmed what Paul T. Rankin first announced in 1927 as a result of pioneer research at Ohio State University, that 70% of our waking day is spent in some type of verbal communication with listening occupying the largest share, 45% (writing, 9%; talking, 30%; reading, 16%), seems to have been overlooked by most educators. The assumption that listening will take care of itself results in a large share of high school graduates who may have but modest reading and writing skills, but who almost always have poor listening habits. Thus, they are ill equipped to either enter business or go on to college.

For some time it has seemed to us that research into Johnny's communication inadequacies has not penetrated deeply enough. We suspect his failures in all kinds of communication may stem from poor, or no, instruction in listening—not listening as an inactive, passive, merely casual reception of stimuli—but listening as an assertive activity.

Listening, we are sure, is at its best a multipurposeful, consciously controlled, learned battery of skills. We are quite sure also that it forms the substructure for, is the basis of, all types of communication including reading and writing, but most notably speaking which, of course, establishes the limits of possible theatrical achievement.

It is too bad, as someone has suggested, that Johnny's ears don't wiggle when he is listening, just as his eyes track when he is reading or his hands cross the pasge when he is writing. If his ears wiggled, his elementary school teachers could tell something about his listening. Lacking listening training, students reach high school and college suffering, many of them, from that invisible handicap, the inability to listen. Such a handicap is particularly limiting to the student of speech and theater.

Listening, we know, is an accumulation of habits, a process that deserves enormous respect and top quality training from early childhood. But training in listening often means nothing more than admonitions to "pay attention"

and listening becomes a hated task, one which frequently stirs up feelings of hostility and revolt in the young.

A stutterer gets attention, but a child with listening aphasia (the equivalent of stuttering in oral intake) causes little concern. A rude command to "listen now!" may be thought sufficient to correct the problem. We have assumed from first grade on that if a child hears (isn't deaf) he or she is automatically listening. But, as Dr. Ralph G. Nichols, that pioneer in the science of listening, pointed out years ago in *Are You Listening*?, "Everyday practice (in listening) does not make us perfect. We may be practicing faults instead of skills!"

Boleslavsky, over 40 years ago, in his six lessons in acting, recognized the importance of "thinking practically, not wishfully." He likened the training of the body to the tuning of an instrument. "Even the most perfectly tuned violin will not play by itself, without the musician to make it sing," he said. "The equipment of the ideal actor . . . is not complete unless he has . . . the technique of an 'emotion maker' or creator." To think practically, Boleslavsky focused on what he termed "Problem steps and Action steps."

Let us follow his approach. What are the Problem steps and the Action steps to improved listening in the speech and theater classroom?

We can dispense with the Problem steps in one giant leap. As I see it, the chief problem, probably the only real problem, in dealing with high school and college level listening is recognizing there is a problem. Creating genuine concern about the total lack or shallowness of listening instruction is our greatest stumbling block.

In a day when machines or pills can handle or cure most ills, it is unusual to discover one basic, very human area, where no computer, no medicine can cure problems. As Franklin H. Ernst, Jr., M.D., says in *Who's Listening*? (Transactional Analysis Handbook of the Listening Activity, 3rd edition, 1973), "Machines are not yet able to 'listen' . . . Machines can speak . . . when programmed and equipped; but technology has not yet devised an apparatus to utilize people-talk and word-listening, let alone an apparatus that *differentiates the innuendo, the nuance, and other shadings coming from tonal inflection, change , or the inferred meanings visually portrayed in the acts of listening. . . .*" (emphasis mine)

In this discussion Dr. Ernst has focused on the extensive listening area brought into action in the speech and theater world. Listening here is truly assertive in nature. By that, I mean it is controlled, positive, multipurposeful, thoughtful, creative, and above all, active. It is the type of listening that is totally aware of all incoming stimuli, verbal as well as non-verbal.

Dr. Ernst emphasizes the activity in listening. "Listening is a non-speaking, often (but not always) nonvocal, perhaps inaudible activity in response to or evocative of audible activity. . . . Listening individuals . . . have regularly been found to be moving individuals–they are *physically, visibly expressive.*" (emphasis mine) Ernst says "the legitimate listener" is blinking "at least every 3 or 4 seconds" while the unmoving, nonblinking, passive listener may show little eye activity.

Having disposed of the Problem steps by acknowledging the great need for listening learning, what are some of the Action steps to improved

listening? Here, the field is wide open for exploration, innovation, experimentation and trial and error by the creative teacher. But let us suggest four basic steps which can be taken immediately.

First, you as teacher, can become an effective Role Model as Assertive Listener. You can study your internal as well as external behavior, your visible body movements, your inner thought processes, as you attend your students. What is your body language saying? Your face language revealing? Teachers are prone to assume authoritarian roles, looking for ways to discipline and prohibit rather than for ways to give freedom and approval. Do you? Do you listen to your students with respect, patience, and empathy? Do you ask them good questions? And listen to them attentively when they answer? As Role Model Listener, you have a profound influence on your students as speakers, actors, and listeners. They will take their cues from you as to how assertive, fully-functioning listeners act and react. Let them know by example that to be listening is to be involved, totally engaged, and fully attentive, to be stimulated and responsive.

Second, you as teacher, can make the listening activity a very vital part of every classroom minute. Someone is always listening in your class. Often, all but one are listening. At times, listeners and performers are more evenly divided. It makes no difference. The activity of listening is always equal to, if not more important than, the activity of performance. You can constantly reinforce this understanding in the minds of your students. You can build in the concept of listening as an enjoyable activity, as something we do not with black and white reception (to agree or disagree) but in full color reception (to get all the nuances, the hidden meanings out of a communication.)

Third, you as teacher, can enlist the cooperation and creativity of your students in pinpointing skills of listening behavior you set up as goals. You enter a mutually agreed upon contract with them. There are several lists of desired listening skills. Sam Duker in *Teaching Listening in the Elementary School* (1971) gives a good list of skills originating in the curriculum bulletin of the Muncie, Indiana Schools, which transfers successfully to more advanced students in speech and theater. These include, among others, the skills of: identifying the speaker's purpose; anticipating what is being said and listening for main ideas; listening for details, drawing inferences and conclusions; summarizing what has been said; distinguishing fact from fiction; listening for past experiences and relationships; and listening appreciatively, creatively, and critically.

Fourth, you as teacher, can encourage your students to create listening activities for the realization of your desired skills. Chain stories, tape recordings, creative drama, role playing, formal drama, pantomime, speeches of all types—all have unlimited opportunities for developing more assertive listeners.

Listening as subject matter in high school and college can be incorporated in all speech and theater classes, and should be. But the emphasis needs to be on listening of the highly active, totally responsive, fully assured nature. We call it Assertive Listening.

All high schools and institutions of higher learning should have in addition, special courses to teach listening as a subject in and of itself.

Understanding listening and how it can be taught is crucial to the teacher preparatory program. It is also crucial to the career-oriented student. (I have always placed heavy emphasis on listening in my business speech classes and my students have found listening of major significance in their business careers.) Listening is also of paramount importance to the actor whose every moment on stage is enlivened and enriched if he or she is "listening" not only for cues but for audience reaction and for full identification with all of the actors on stage.

As that great old trooper, George Burns, said when Barbara Walters asked him the secret of his perfect timing, "All you gotta' do is listen!"

And now, returning to our reference to Boleslavsky and his six lessons, after *The Creature* had completed months of acting lessons, sometimes years apart, her Teacher says in the final moments of the final lesson: "Don't look at me now, my dearest friend, look into space and listen with your inner ear. . . . Don't miss anything. . . . Listen to the waves of the sea. Absorb their sweeping change of time, with your body, brain and soul. Let the meaning . . . of your words be a continuation of their eternal sound. . . . Go through the same experience with woods, fields, rivers, sky above—then turn to the city and swing your spirit to its sound. . . ."

Indeed, the teacher who can swing the student's spirit to sound has taught the greatest lesson of all—how to listen. Knowing this, the student is equipped to speak or act, read or write, with enormously improved skill.

HOW DO WE KNOW?

CARL H. WEAVER

It is never easy to write about a subject the second time, and this is no exception. The single thought I want to express in these few pages I wrote about in Appendix A of my book *Human Listening: Processes and Behavior.* In that discussion I documented the statements I am about to make here and listed the studies concerned. I will not do that here.

The thought one should keep in mind when he reads a report of a listening training program is that only a few people who develop, use, and report such programs know much about testing. Even highly regarded statisticians often think as if they had never studied measurement, and many of them have not. In truth, it is easy to generate an argument by asking someone questions about the validity and reliability of his testing procedures. He is likely to defend himself with some high degree of vehemence, and the degree often seems to be positively correlated with the degree of his ignorance. In spite of the great advances in our knowledge of measurement in the last few decades, the academic world is still heavily populated with people who believe even that they can decide exactly what marks students have earned by their answers on a subjective test.

Consider what happens when a study is set up to teach listening. First, one has to decide what to teach. Is listening a unitary skill or a set of subskills? If it is a unitary skill, what skill is it and what behavior should one try to change? If it is a set of subskills, what are they, and are they the same in all kinds of situations or specific to each occasion?

Secondly, after the training period has been completed, how does one evaluate its effectiveness? Standardized tests such as the Brown-Carlsen and the Educational Testing Service's tests were built to measure skills their authors decided were the critical subskills, and no two tests measure the same behaviors. It seems unwise to use either of these tests to measure the effectiveness of a training program which was designed to teach skills the tests do not measure and not to teach the skills they do measure. Yet some researchers have done this.

Thirdly, how good is the test? Even a rudimentary knowledge of item-test correlations, test reliability, and other factors will suggest that one should not believe a report that a listening training program has been effective unless the researcher reports the data on his testing program. It seems odd that people will distrust such carefully constructed tests as intelligence tests

but believe uncritically a journal report that does not even describe the test used. It is my belief that an editor should not accept such a report, even though he is hard pressed for space.

Finally, the difficulty of a test is presently indeterminable, and probably will remain so. Everyone knows that some tests and some test items are more difficult than others. We can assess the difficulty relatively by computing the proportion of respondees who mark an item correctly (for a test item) or by computing the mean score of all respondees on the total test. Such a procedure is only relative, however, not absolute, because the difficulty of an item (or a test) so computed depends in some unknown part on the difficulty of the material being tested. The two variables are confounded and probably will never be factored out.

We do have several procedures for determining the difficulty of a text, but each has its own peculiarities and biases. The Dale-Chall Readability test, for example, was standardized on elementary-school health books. The Flesch Readability Formula used newspaper copy and only a few of the more than one hundred readability factors isolated by William Gray. The two formulas give different ratings for the same materials, and the ratings are not consistently different from text to text. The grading of texts for the public schools is generally done by guessing, partly by the authors and partly by the publishers.

This problem should prevent researchers from concluding that listeners hear only some "known" proportion of the material they listen to. In addition, in order to compute such a proportion, one must have a number in the denominator which would, of course, be the amount of information sent to the listener. Shannon's formula does not compute this, but something quite different. In truth, we have no way at all of computing the amount of data sent to a listener in any message. Yet one can find in the literature such statements as "Listeners heard only 25 percent of the message," when in reality the most that could be said is, "Listeners scored, on the average, 25 percent on the test used." If the material is "easy" and the test items "easy," listeners might mark 90 percent of the answers correctly.

This has been a plea to readers of reports in journals to question the testing procedures before deciding that their students should be subjected to the listening training program described; and to researchers to evaluate the results of their programs carefully before reporting them. Some people believe anything in print.

AN OBSERVATION OF SOME INCONSISTENCIES IN THE BROWN-CARLSEN LISTENING TEST

RICHARD D. HALLEY

In discussing problems associated with listening tests it will be useful to look at some data on the Brown-Carlsen Listening test. This data casts some doubts on the test retest validity of the Brown-Carlsen Listening Test when using one form of the test for a pretest and the other form as a post test. It will serve as an example of the kind of problem that one encounters when trying to test the effectiveness of a training program in listening.

The data comes from an extensive research program conducted by Carl H. Weaver and in part is offered as a potential explanation for some confusing results obtained from one of Weaver's experiments.[1] Weaver found a significant difference between his experimental group and his control group on the Brown-Carlsen part E, but in his report he devalued the result because the means for the experimental group for both the form AM part E pre test and the form BM part E post test were identical, 12.65. The significant difference resulted from the control group scoring lower on the post test than on the pre test. On the surface this was a discouraging result. Weaver concluded, "Perhaps, during the spring quarter at a big university . . . no regression is gain." Inspection of data collected by Weaver during terms prior to the experimental term lends support to the conclusion that Weaver's experimental subjects may well have improved.

What is the basis for this "unusual" assertion? From the data I am about to report, I conclude that the Brown-Carlsen form AM does not appear to produce similar scores to the Brown-Carlsen form BM. One cannot conclude from this data whether the two tests are not of the same difficulty or simply do not measure the same things. One can conclude that use of the form AM as a pre test and form BM as a post test in an experiment will produce misleading information. At the very least one must have some knowledge of characteristic scoring patterns for large numbers of subjects in order to draw conclusions.

Data is available for three terms prior to the above-mentioned experiment. In the first term the tests were given as follows. Early in the term form AM was administered, at mid term, form BM was administered, and at the term's end form AM was readministered. The pattern in the data is disturbing. One might reasonably expect that the scores from one testing to the next would reflect similar changes in scores from one part of the test to

the next. If that pattern did not occur, one might at least expect that the scores from the first to the second testing would reflect similar changes to those from the second to the third testing. When neither of the above is true, it becomes difficult to interpret the results because one does not know whether the scores reflect a true state of affairs, tests that do measure the same things, subjects that are not following directions, or differences in test difficulties. There may be other interpretations.

In the first term mentioned above the means for parts A,B, and C are believable. However, the mean score for part D form BM (the mid term) was significantly higher than both the early term AM mean score and the end of term AM mean score. There was not an orderly increase in mean score from mid term to the end of term as was true for part B. There was not even a mean score that reflected no increase as in parts A and C. The end of term mean score for part D was significantly lower than the mid term mean score and essentially the same as the early term score.

The mean scores for part E reflect just the reverse. Part E form BM mid term mean score was significantly lower than both the early term and end of term form AM mean scores. A look at the means in Table #1 will confirm this frustrating result.[2]

During the second term the tests were administered in the same order and at the same times during the term. The pattern in the data is very much the same. A look at Table #2 will confirm that not only is the pattern the same, the magnitudes of the mean scores are also rather close.

As I continued to search the data I noted that during the third term the tests were administered at the same times again but, in a different order. Form BM was administered early in the term and form AM was administered both at mid term and at the end of the term. The pattern in the means is

TABLE #1
Means for Brown-Carlsen: First Term

Parts / Forms	A	B	C	D	E
AM	10.31	12.95	5.86	6.38	13.18
BM	12.87	15.52	6.02	8.03	11.89
AM	12.26	16.17	5.95	6.43	13.99

N = 120 LSD = .64

TABLE #2
Means for Brown-Carlsen: Second Term

Parts / Forms	A	B	C	D	E
AM	10.67	12.69	6.08	6.30	12.56
BM	13.02	15.40	6.24	7.76	11.86
AM	12.53	16.22	5.93	6.57	14.22

N = 45 LSD = 1.07

again interesting. In part A there are no longer significant differences in mean scores. In part B there is still a steady progression and in part C there are no differences as before. In part D, however, there is a very interesting change in pattern. The early term mean score is now significantly greater than either the mid or end of term mean scores. Put another way, all subjects thus far have scored significantly better on form BM part D regardless of whether it was administered first or second. Is part D form BM easier than part D form AM? Do they measure the same things? One or both of these questions appear to have disturbing answers.

The results for part E are just as interesting. There is now no significant drop from early to mid term. The two means are essentially the same. There is a significant difference between the two form AM mean scores (mid term and end of term), and as before, there is a significant difference between the BM and AM forms (early to end of term). It would appear that for part E form BM may be more difficult than form AM or perhaps again they may not measure the same things. Check Table #3 for the mean scores.

Let us return to the experiment mentioned in the beginning. Weaver found significant differences between his experimental and control subjects on part E, but no difference in mean scores for his experimental group (pre - form AM to post - form BM). There was no test administered at mid term. Weaver's experimental group may well be interpreted as improving (if we assume the two forms are not equal in difficulty) since the control group did exhibit the now familiar drop in mean score from AM to BM. The means are displayed in Table #4.

TABLE #3
Means for Brown-Carlsen: Third Term

Forms	Parts	A	B	C	D	E
BM		12.48	14.04	6.10	7.98	13.62
AM		12.28	15.19	6.03	6.50	13.78
AM		13.01	16.89	6.13	6.54	15.22

N = 45 LSD = 1.07

TABLE #4
Means for Brown-Carlsen: Fourth Term

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Forms	Parts	A	B	C	D	E
AM		9.81	12.49	5.54	5.76	12.65
BM		13.19	15.86	6.11	7.81	12.65

CONTROL GROUP

Forms	Parts	A	B	C	D	E
AM		9.76	11.27	5.76	6.11	12.92
BM		13.32	14.65	6.14	8.11	11.27

N = 37, 37 LSD = 1.17

Of course, we cannot choose reliably between the two explanations (differences in difficulty of tests or whether the two forms measure the same things) so we can not assert with any certainty that the experimental subjects did improve. However, we are left with a more concrete notion of why it is necessary to be cautious about using the Brown-Carlsen and tests like it. One must know a great deal about a test and about the characteristic scoring patterns on the test before one can make valid claims as to the meaning of any scores one might obtain.[3]

NOTES

[1]Carl H. Weaver, "An Evaluation of a Method of Teaching Listening," Final Report for HEW Grant Number OEG-5-71-0044(509) July, 1972.

[2]To Simplify a complicated analysis the overall MS within (6.26) was chosen as the estimate of the variance for all comparisons. Note that, analyzed as individual parts, the variance will vary from a characteristic 1.4 to 2.3 on parts C and D to a characteristic 3.4 to 4.0 on part A, to a characteristic 6.0 to 7.1 on parts B and E. This is because the possible sources vary from part to part. Therefore, the statistical confidence in differences observed in parts A, C, and D can be considered even greater than that stated here. Alpha is set at .05.

[3]This essay does not address itself to the question of the usefulness of the Brown-Carlsen Listening Test as an instrument for teachers to analyze listening difficulties of their students, which is the primary intended use of both forms of the test. In view of the extensive normative data available, that function of the test seems still quite useful.

LISTENING: IS IT IN THE PERSON OR IN THE MESSAGE

HARRY R. GIANNESCHI

Listening, the term used in communication to generally indicate the receiving, decoding, and interpreting of the message, was in all probability the very first form of communication. Certainly, if we are to accept the arguments of language acquisition theorists, it may be safe to assume that even before our earliest ancestors could transform vocal sounds into meaningful transmission, they were able in a sense to communicate with their environment. Indeed, there is no reason to doubt that our pre-historic forefathers learned to receive the sounds of their fellow inhabitants, the dinosaur, and to decode and interpret those sounds into meaningful intrapersonal messages indicating danger or safety before they themselves could transmit those same messages interpersonally to others.

Yet, it may well be that the importance of listening has been eroded through the years until now it stands on the very lowest rung of importance in the ever-increasing list of human communication variables. Undoubtedly, such a statement will bother those few persons who even today spend an enormous amount of time and energy in research associated with listening and in teaching listening as an important part of their basic speech communication courses. Nonetheless, the evidence supporting the relative unimportance of listening in our speech courses is significant.

Look, for example, at the speech text-books that are published each year with increasing frequency. Analyze both the length and strength of the sections devoted to listening as compared with the other sections of the book. Look also at your own course syllabus, and I believe you will discover either a total absence of course instruction devoted to listening or at best only a small amount. Finally, look at the catalogues from colleges and universities. How many of them contain even a single course, undergraduate or graduate, devoted to the subject of listening?

Does this then mean that the concept of listening is no longer an integral part of the communication process? I think not. I think rather that the importance of listening has been pushed aside by our headlong dash into the instruction of speaker and speech-centered variables. Yet, we are perhaps not entirely to blame for this situation. From the earliest beginning of rhetorical theory to the more contemporary communication theory our field has concerned itself more with "production" variables than with "reception" variables.

Nonetheless, some of the blame must be ours. As teachers of Speech & Theatre, have we wrongly assumed that the ability to listen effectively is easier than the ability to speak effectively? Certainly, none of us would argue that the ability to speak effectively is solely dependent on our ability to vocalize sound. But, how many of us have for too long assumed that the ability to listen effectively is solely dependent on our ability to hear sounds?

Perhaps, the time has come for us to stop looking at listening as if it stood by itself and start viewing listening as only a part of a total process. I believe that if one man listens to another that it is caused not only by the ability to listen, but also by the nature of the message and by the characteristics of the speaker. Perhaps, we should start looking at the various dimensions of listening. Although, I do not know how many dimensions there are, if we look only at five we will be making a start in the right direction. It seems to me that there is a complexity dimension to listening, an interest dimension, a familiarity dimension, an abstraction dimension, and a distraction dimension.

I believe that the complexity dimension is concerned with the degree of time and effort needed by the listener to hear, decode, and interpret what he hears. If what we hear is too complex and it requires more time and effort than we care to spend, then, I believe, we stop listening altogether. I would love to know, for example, how many debate judges have in the past reached such a point. Yet, we could not conclude from this that the judges were not able to listen. It could well be that the complexity of the material being presented was such that they decided to no longer spend the time and effort needed to listen.

Yet, there are times when the complexity of the material is such that it requires little time and effort to listen, and listening still does not take place. If it does not, I believe it may well have been caused by the interest dimension of listening. How often is the message communicated neither interesting nor motivating in and of itself. I sometimes wonder how many of my students have done poorly on an examination for no other reason than the material I presented or the way in which I presented the material was by its very nature, dull. To the extent that this has happened, I certainly would be wrong to complain that my students were not able to listen. Perhaps I as the speaker was at fault and not the listener.

Consider also the problems that can be caused by what I call the familiarity dimension of listening. There was a period in my life, for example, when I was certain my children could not hear, let alone listen. If I said something on Monday, on Tuesday they would act as if they had never heard it. I discovered, however, it was neither a problem of being able to hear nor being able to listen. Rather, I believe it was a problem of their not being familiar enough with what I had said to them. I followed from then on the example set by those in advertising. I worked under the assumption that the more often I said the same thing to them, the greater the chance that they would remember what I said.

I have also come to believe that what I call the abstraction dimension of listening causes still other problems. General semanticists have argued for years that the level of abstraction of what is being communicated will determine the extent to which the listener will receive the message. They

believe that what is concrete is more easily communicated than what is abstract. Perhaps, before we attempt to test our student's ability to listen, we should first attempt to determine the level of abstraction in what it is that will be communicated.

Finally, I suggest we consider the problems caused by the distraction dimension of listening. We perceive things not only through our sense of sound, but also through our sense of sight, touch, taste, and smell. If at times the listener does not seem to comprehend what a speaker is saying, it may well be caused by the distraction of what is perceived by the other senses. A message that is played back on a tape recorder may bring about one reaction, while a message that is delivered live may bring about still another.

I believe that only when we start to view listening as a part of the total process of human communication that we will be better able to teach it. With increasing frequency I hear people complain that Johnny can't listen. I view such a statement in the same way I view the statement that Johnny can't read, that Johnny can't count, that Johnny can't write, that Johnny can't speak. Why do we always want to blame Johnny? How can we expect Johnny to learn any of the basic skills when we as teachers have failed to understand them or learn them. Let us dedicate ourselves to changing all that.

CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND EFFECTIVE LISTENING

WILLARD A. UNDERWOOD

Although communication theorists include the listener as a necessary component and listening as a major function of the process of human communication, novelist Taylor Caldwell may well have provided the best justification for the teaching of listening.

> The most desperate need of men today is not a new vaccine for any disease, or a new religion, or a new "way of life." Man does not need to go to the moon or other solar systems. He does not require bigger and better bombs and missiles. He will not expire of frustration if he is unable to buy the brightest and newest gadgets, or if all his children cannot go to college. His basic needs are few, and it takes little to acquire them, in spite of the advertisers. He can survive on a small amount of bread and in the meanest shelter. He always did.
>
> His real need, his most terrible need, is for someone to listen to him, not as a "patient," but as a human soul. He needs to tell someone of what he thinks, of the bewilderment he encounters when he tries to discover why he was born, how he must live, and where his destiny lies.[1]

Yet, if the problems for two persons of the same culture who attempt to communicate are many, the problems for two persons of different cultures are even greater.

Do we know, for example, even how to define the parameters of a culture? Is there one American culture? Or is the United States of America, or any other nation, a conglomeration of numerous cultures? Should we distinguish cultures according to one criterion when discussing ethnic origins or language groupings, and another criterion when analyzing political or social structures? Over eight hundred languages are spoken on the African continent, and yet we frequently hear references to "the African culture." The similarities of language and culture of neighboring tribes might lead us to conclude that one culture is being examined; but while there are four *major* tribes in Zambia, for example, a total of seventy-two different tribes—each with different cultural attributes—exist.[2]

The most frequently identified problem in conducting cross-cultural research is the impossibility of any individual being knowledgeable of several cultures and all cultural variables. Yet, the need for greater cross-cultural understanding is recognized by communication theorists. William Howell, for example, suggests that "our inability to exchange ideas with contrasting groups at home and with representatives of foreign cultures is recognized as the cause of catastrophic misunderstandings," and that "the need to improve

intercultural speech-communication calls for substantial changes in all systems of speech education, with urgency."[3]

If Professor Howell is correct, as I believe he is, what have we done to change things? Perhaps Nichols and Stevens were right when they argued that the general American culture is one in which people are taught *not* to listen.[4] Perhaps, "the silent act of listening is no match for the 'bellowing and visible salvos which daily are fired' at us," that "the way to impose one's will on others, which seems increasingly to have become the objective of many pressure groups, is to talk, yell, shout, and not to give the other guy a chance to reply."[5]

Perhaps we should listen to Charles Kelly when he asks us to encourage our students to see "the other person's world as he sees it, without judgment."[6] He may well have been right when he argued that the advantages in *empathetic listening* are that the speaker expresses himself more readily if he knows he's being listened to; that the speaker finds he's not alone and that someone cares enough to listen; that the speaker feels safe rather than threatened; and that people tend to reveal more when there is no anticipation of evaluation or judgment.[7] If these conditions are important when two persons of the same culture attempt to communicate with one another, how much more important are they when two persons of different cultures attempt to communicate?

Ethnocentrism, the tendency to evaluate all other cultures in comparison to one's own culture, almost always appears in a cross-cultural setting. It creates misunderstanding, misinterpretation and mistrust of other cultures and individuals from different cultures. How often as listeners have we assumed that if someone elses culture is different from ours that "it must be inferior"?[8] Yet, what is being done to solve this particular problem? Do we encourage our students to study a second language? Indeed, how many of us as teachers are required to understand a second language? What efforts are being made to encourage an understanding between Whites and Blacks, between Jews and Arabs, between Catholics and Protestants?

Within an American subculture, for example, such as the Black American group, communication behavior reflects ineffective listening behavior. Indeed, Whitney Young once suggested that black and white Americans never communicated effectively because "what we've had has been a kind of noisemaking between white and Negro citizens where white people said what was to be done and Negroes agreed and acquiesced." Young argued that "Communication, if it's to be meaningful, exists between people who are peers, who have a mutual respect and who can communicate on other things than problems."[9]

Killian and Grigg, however, argue that white Americans have failed to understand the black culture becuase of ethnocentrism. They believe that "most white Americans, even those white leaders who attempt to communicate and cooperate with their Negro counterparts, do not see racial inequality in the same way that the Negro does." The problem, they believe, is that a white "must exert a special effort to expose himself to the actual conditions under which large numbers of Negroes live," and even then "he does not perceive the subjective inequalities inherent in the system of

segregation because he does not experience them daily as a Negro does."[10] Differing perceptions, resulting largely from different cultural biases and expectations, clearly affect how we view other cultures.

Many cultures are redefined as technological advances are made. Obviously, technological change creates new and different jobs, social roles and expectations. But when books and mass media enter a cultural environment which has depended upon an oral tradition, the changes are more pronounced. As David Reisman has argued, "as long as the spoken or sung word monopolizes the symbolic environment, it is particularly impressive; but once books enter that environment is can never be quite the same again—books are, so to speak, the gunpowder of the mind." They "bring with them detachment and a critical attitude that is not possible in an oral tradition."[11] What is the result of two persons attempting to communicate when the one has developed on the basis of both the written and the spoken word and the other on the basis of only the spoken word?

Our culture, however, influences not only the meaning of words but also the meaning of actions. "Each culture fosters or specifically trains its young as children and as adolescents to develop different kinds of thresholds to tactile contacts and stimulation so that their organic, constitutional, temperamental characteristics are accentuated or reduced."[12] One result of this cultural conditioning is that members of different cultures reflect different non-verbal behavior. Flora Davis believes that "every culture has its own body language, and children absorb its nuances along with spoken language."[13]

Yet, we frequently fail to recognize the importance of non-verbal communication during cross-cultural experiences. "Waiters in India," for example, "are summoned by a click of the fingers which, on the face of it, is an inconspicuous and efficient gesture." Often, however, Americans believe that "snapping fingers for service is the act of a superior asserting power over a menial," and is viewed as "a violation of the democratic ethos."[14]

Indeed, at times a person from one culture will purposely conceal the meaning of his message from persons from without his culture. At times when one culture is suppressed by another culture, the suppressed group may communicate in ways which members of the individual's culture will understand but non-members will fail to comprehend. Arthur Smith, for example, agrues that several songs of American slaves contained messages which slaveowners did not understand but exchanged meaningful information among the slaves themselves.[15] Andrea Rich has also shown interest in this problem and believes that "the lack of trust among the races has caused interracial communicators to reject the face values of verbal communication and to search for nonverbal cues as indicators of real meaning and response in interracial communication situations."[16]

Yet, if speaker and listener are from different cultures the problems are compounded. In Japan, for example, hissing "is regarded as a polite expression of deference to a superior;" whereas "in England hissing is regarded as a rude disapprobation of an actor." Consider also that although spitting in some cultures is a symbol of contempt, "in the African Masi tribe it indicates affection and benediction," and in "certain American Indian

tribes spitting is employed as a method of healing by a medicine man."[17]

Several observations can be made about the characteristics of effective listening. First, *listening is a skill* which can be taught, developed and improved. With correct practice and attention, we can improve our listening abilites. Second, *listening is behavior* which is inseparable from our personality and attitudes, and which affects and is affected by our total behavior. Our prejudices, cultural biases, communication skills, information and attitudes affect our listening behavior. Third, *listening is perceptual*, involving semantic considerations and cross-cultural references. Distortion may occur because of these factors. Fourth, *listening is a process* which is a sub-system of the process of human communication, and is thus affected by other components of the act of communication.

As Carl Weaver has argued, "how well a person *can* listen and how well he does listen are not the same thing," because how well an individual listens depends upon his listening habits and his willingness to listen.[18] The three factors of capacity to listen, willingness to listen and listening habits directly affect an individual's listening success. Charles Kelly found that the most significant differences between good and poor listeners were that good listeners generally were more adventurous, emotionally stable, mature, sophisticated, outgoing, bright, dominant, enthusiastic, trustful and controlled.[19]

Even with these characteristics, however, barriers to cross-cultural communication can occur. We cannot communicate if a concept used by a speaker is not in the repertoire of the listener or if the symbols used to convey an idea have different meaning for the listener. Yet, a skilled listener can infer many meanings from a verbal message.

To reduce or eliminate communication barriers in cross-cultural settings, six specific steps are recommended. First, each participant should have a clear understanding of self; who he is, what his cultural norms are, what is acceptable and unacceptable to his expectations. Second, knowledge and information regarding racial and/or cultural characteristics which affect him should be understood. Third, perception skills should be developed to enable the listener to perceive differences in his own behavior and the behavior of others. Fourth, the ability to establish a common-ground relationship should be acquired. Fifth, the ability to identify the difference between participants and their significance should be acquired. Sixth, the listener should become willing to negotiate if necessary those factors on which participants do not agree.

It is ultimately the responsibility of the listener to actively participate in the communication process. The responsibility is even greater in cross-cultural settings. If Taylor Caldwell was right when he argued that man's most important need is "for someone to listen to him," then as teachers of Speech & Theatre we should actively help our students answer that need.

NOTES

[1]Taylor Caldwell, *The Listener* (Garden City, 1960).

[2]Richard Hall, *Zam* (New York, 1965), pp. 11-13.

[3]William S. H "Foreword," *International Studies of National Speech Education Systems*, Fred Casmir and L. S. Harms (Minneapolis, 1970), p. 310.

[4]Carl Weaver, *Human Listening: Processes and Behavior* (Indianapolis, 1972), p. 14.

[5]Carl Weaver, p. 15.

[6]Charles Kelly, "Empathetic Listening," *Small Group Communication: A Reader*, ed. Robert S. Cathcart and Larry A. Samovar (Dubuque, Iowa, 1970), p. 255.

[7]Charles Kelly, p. 255.

[8]J. H. Donnelly, Jr. and J. K. Ryans, Jr., "The Role of Culture in Organizing Overseas Operations: The Advertising Experience," *University of Washington Business Review*, XXX (1969), pp. 35-41.

[9]George Metcalf, *Black Profiles* (New York, 1968), p. 320.

[10]Lewis Killian and Charles Grigg, *Racial Crisis in America: Leadership in Conflict* (Englewood Cliffs, 1964), p. 73.

[11]David Reisman, "The Oral and Written Traditions," *Intercultural Communication: A Reader* (Belmont, 1972), p. 5.

[12]Lawrence K. Frank, "Tactile Communication," *Rhetoric of Nonverbal Communication*, ed. Haig Bosmajian, (San Francisco, 1971), p. 51.

[13]Flora Davis, "How to Read Body Language," in Bosmajian, p. 4.

[14]Alene M. Eisenberg and Ralph R. Smith, Jr., *Nonverbal Communication* (Indianapolis, 1971), p. 77.

[15]Arthur Smith, *Rhetoric of Black Revolution* (Boston, 1969), p. 45.

[16]Andrea L. Rich, *Interracial Communication* (New York, 1974), p. 161.

[17]Weston Labarre, "The Culture Basis of Emotions and Gestures," *Journal of Personality*, XVI (1947-48), p. 55.

[18]Carl Weaver, p. 7.

[19]Charles Kelly, p. 255.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE TEACHING OF LISTENING AND MATERIALS TO ASSIST IN SAME

RICHARD D. HALLEY

I preceive many of us forgetting that listening is a set of skills, skills that can evolve into a beautiful art. Consequently to learn to listen well means we must treat listening like any other skill activity such as those involved in basketball, painting, writing, or public speaking. In working with the teaching of listening the most pervasive problem we have had until recently has been the lack of an overall perspective with which to analyse these skills. We have needed a way to conceptualize listening that would apply regardless of the intent of the listener or the context in which one was listening. Without such a perspective an effective analysis of the process is very difficult.

In a paper delivered at the Eastern Communication Association Convention in 1975 I tried to provide that perspective.[1] Basically I started with the work of Carl H. Weaver and his hypothesis that increasing the rate at which one handles aurally input data will make one a better overall listener.[2] Research attempts to support this hypothesis failed, however the results were still very interesting. Subjects did increase the rate at which they could handle data and they did get better at recalling facts, which was the task that provided a measurement of their listening activities during training. They just did not get better at any of the other tasks in the pre and post tests of the experiment, which was what the hypothesis had been. Something was good about the process, there was improvement. At the same time as the Weaver project was finishing, Neville Moray was working on an exhaustive program aimed at supporting the general thesis that people learn to attend to the world (listen to it, see it) by building up a better and better set of estimates about what is going to happen next.[3] The results of Weaver's work were easily interpreted in this framework after reviewing Moray's work.

Moray's findings were clear cut and convincing. If his subjects continued to practice a clearly defined task long enough (30 days for simple detection tasks), they eventually operated as though they knew the statistical probability of the occurrence of the events they wished to attend in the task. In other words they operated as though they had an internal model in their minds of what to expect to attend next that helped them know whether the event to be attended actually occurred. In effect they were responding to the future.

The implications of Moray's work are very straightforward and extremely useful. All that remains is to articulate the results in terms that are useful to the teacher of listening. If we build internal models, then they are only available in useful terms when:

1) the task is clear,

2) the elements to be attended in the task are clearly defined,

3) there has been sufficient practice at the task (preferably after 1 and 2 are clearly understood) so that enough experience has been accumulated to know, at a particular time, what the probability of a given element occurring really is.

4) Number 3 requires rapid and accurate feedback that provides information about whether the "correct" element has been detected.

Thus support for the long held belief that our expectations of what is to come significantly effect what we perceive is now available in very concrete terms and the task of teachers of listening is clear.

1) clearly define each listening task that we wish to teach in terms of the intent of the listener.

2) clearly articulate the elements in each task that must be attended in order to do each task.

3) design and implement a series of listening experiences that go on long enough, and that have rapid and accurate feedback, so that the listener can learn the probabilities of occurrence of each element in the task, at any given time in the task.

LISTENING TASKS

The first task that I would like to discuss is one that has been often ignored by teachers of speech and listening until recently. When the task has been analyzed it has been done primarily in the one on one context. This task is the separation of affective (emotional) portions of messages from their cognitive (content) components. This task might also be conceived as including the determination of the intent of the speaker since intent seems to be so intimately associated conceptually with the affective domain. This task is very important because if there are emotional elements in the message that are not understood by the listener (including his/her own emotions) or if the listener does not understand the intent of the speaker, then the chances of accurate cognitive listening are very small. This is true because mental processing capacity will be consumed by the emotion and there will be little processing energy left over to process the content portion of the messages.

Where can one get help with understanding this task, defining its elements, and designing a learning program? There are several places. Primarily the authors have concerned themselves with child raising, counseling, or human relations training. In their writing they have sought to clarify the kinds of purposes a speaker might have, clarify the kinds of purposes a listener might have, and indicate the kinds of responses a listener might give to a speaker which indicate the listener understands what the speaker is trying to say. These responses of the listener to the speaker are crucial for two reasons. 1) They indirectly indicate the elements which a listener would have to attend to if the listener is to separate the affective and cognitive domains, and 2) They make it possible for the listener to know

whether s/he is attending the "correct" stimuli. To understand that number 2 is true one need only look at the types of responses that are suggested for the listener and note that the speaker can confirm or deny their accuracy. The general framework that is suggested is that the listener assert to the speaker what the listener perceives the speaker is feeling or intending at times when there is significant energy on the part of the speaker with regard to the feeling or intent. Note that without this step in the process there is no way that the listener can ever learn whether s/he is observing the "correct stimuli" and interpreting those stimuli accurately.

Who are the authors? A major contribution was made by Carl Rogers in his discussions of responding to the underlying meaning and intent of a message.[4] Herbert Adams and William Rogers in *Project Listening* mean much the same thing by their term deep listening.[5] In his book *P.E.T.: Parent Effectiveness Training* Thomas Gordon has made a major contribution with his response system.[6] He has tried to provide a system by which a listener can choose how to respond to a speaker. Gordon's distinction between "problems" that are the speaker's and "problems" that are the listener's and his suggestions for formats in which to respond in each case are conceptually very powerful. I have tried to refine this system by discussing the energy level surrounding the problems of listeners and speakers and suggesting that there are no problems of significance if there is not sufficient energy associated with the situation. I have also suggested that for most people the word problem does not connote happy or pleasant feelings and that Gordon's suggestions for responding to people with problems are also useful for responding to people who are feeling great about something. Another useful contribution was made by Carkhuff when he suggested a system for evaluating the usefulness of a helping listener's responses based on his conception of the maturity of the helping listener.[7]

Each of these authors attempts to provide some conceptualizations which a teacher of listening may find useful in defining the various intents that a speaker may have and the elements which a listener would find useful to respond to if s/he is trying to listen effectively in the affective/cognitive separation task. Most authors make some suggestions about the amounts of time necessary to learn their systems. In general the suggestions do not seem to me to provide enough time for an internal model to become well established. I believe that this particular task requires a great deal of time because many of the necessary responses of the listener are not understood without the concomitant level of maturity as suggested by Carkhuff.

Certainly the general task of knowing what a speaker is feeling and finding ways of compassionately letting the speaker know you understand takes months to clearly conceptualize and years to be able to respond consistently with desirable accuracy. Note that many of your students will come to you with the task of learning this distinction and how to respond to it already begun. This means to me that a teacher of listening must carefully stratify his/her courses so that different individuals of differing maturity may enter the learning process at different places and that certainly courses can not be set up so that the criterion for an "A" is being able to respond at an unrealistically high level of maturity.

Perhaps the most useful contribution of these authors has been to provide a means by which a listener could get useful feedback. This has been a major stumbling block conceptually. Thus the general notion that at appropriate times the listener should "reflect on" the meaning and intent of the speaker and say what s/he believes the speaker is feeling or meaning provides the speaker with the stimulus which s/he can affirm or deny. If the speaker says "yes you are right," you have good evidence that you were observing the "right" elements. In my experience it is not likely that the speaker will be afraid to say no at these times unless there is an important superior-subordinate relationship involved. If the speaker says "no you are wrong," you know that either you are looking at the wrong elements, evaluating the elements inappropriately, or that you are threatening the speaker so that s/he is unwilling to admit the truth to you.

The next set of tasks I would like to discuss are those of listening to particular types of content. Weaver lists more than 30 such tasks in his report on the experiments related to speed of cognitive processing. At best we have just begun to articulate the elements in each of these tasks. It would be consistent with learning theory if we were to ascertain the most appropriate tasks for our particular students and start from there. A few seem worth noting along with some indications as to where information on their definition and clarification might be found.

1) *Listening for facts.*

I would look to the general semantics notion of fact-inference distinction. Toulmin's notion of data has seemed very helpful to my students, and of course let's not forget the discussions in public speaking texts with regard to supporting materials. The next obvious step is to have students listen and test them often in ways that provide rather immediate feedback.

2) *Listening for the central idea and/or the main points.*

I would look to discussions of organizational structures, to studies of the uses and abuses of transitions, and to studies of indicators of speaker intent. A program by Ella Erway called *Listening: A Programmed Approach* may be helpful here also.[8] Again there must be a lot of listening and a lot of testing which provides immediate feedback.

I also believe that it is generally desirable to concentrate on one task until it is fairly well learned before starting another. Therefore, even though they might be more boring to the student, course structures which deal with only one listening task at a time and stay with that task until the internal model can be reasonably expected to have established itself would be preferable to course structures that confront the student with many different listening tasks at times closely conjoint with each other.

A NOTE ON EFFECTIVENESS

Weaver demonstrated that students could learn to more effectively retain facts from stories by simply listening and taking tests twice a week. Weaver's students were not highly motivated beyond wanting two credits. They had to wait till the next class period for their feedback, and Weaver did not spend much time discussing the nature of facts in those class periods, because he was trying to test the effect of increased processing speed and not have his results affected by other significant variables. And yet by having the students

do the same kind of task for an entire quarter, they did get better. I firmly believe that a teacher who takes the time to clearly explain the elements in the task several times during the term, who responds to student questions about the task and its elements, and who returns scores on listening tests rapidly, will produce striking results. If we add to this situation students who want to learn and who believe that by going through the process they will learn, the results will be excellent.

One of the difficulties in listening effectively is that it takes an enormous amount of personal energy. It is hard work. Just knowing how to listen does not make one an effective listener. Even having worked hard at establishing an internal model does not guarantee an effective listener, because one must still apply one's personal energies to the task.

In getting a new listener to confront this issue I find it very useful to describe to him/her some of the phenomena in the process of listening. For example, no matter how hard we work at listening our attention will periodically lapse. This is often referred to as a microsleep. When this happens we usually do not obtain the information that was transmitted during the period of the microsleep. It is my observation that most people believe that if they are or could be listening well, they would know all of the information in the message. It seems to help to point out that this situation is never true, and that no matter how good one gets one will never become perfect. The idea that one will not get all the information can be easily demonstrated by constructing a message that has several discreet parts, each of which has the capacity to set off personal fantasies in the listener, with no transitions between them. Present the message to the class and tape the presentation. Then play the tape back for the listeners so they can check what they missed. They will readily be able to see some things they missed. Of course the reason for the loss of information is that the listener is actively fantasizing rather than microsleeping, but the demonstration makes the general idea become more real. Currently the best book that deals with this type of information about listening is Carl H. Weaver's *Human Listening: Processes and Behavior.*[9] The second and third chapters are particularly helpful and synthesize a great deal of current information.

The last issue that I would like to discuss is the level of skill of the person trying to teach listening. A teacher lacking skill as a listener may not be a great problem for tasks such as listening for facts, or central ideas etc., although it is very desirable for the teacher to be capable of defining the elements in the tasks themselves so that s/he is capable of answering the questions of the students. However, when it comes to teaching listening in the interpersonal context, particularly the separation of affective and cognitive portions of messages, the skill level of the teacher is vital. Questions will be asked in class about situations that do not meet the assumptions of the theoretical suggestions for how the listener should respond to the speaker. Unless the teacher is able to detect such situations they will probably find students saying "but I did that and it did not work." The most important assumption underlying these suggestions is that the individuals in the interaction are desiring to build a positive, warm, respectful relationship. For example, if the listener tells the speaker how the speaker's message is

affecting his feelings and the speaker intends to make fun of the listener, the listener has just supplied the precise information by which the speaker can effect the best sarcastic remark. A second and perhaps far more important reason why the teacher of listening in interpersonal settings must be personally skilled in listening is that the learners will learn best from the modeling of the teacher. I will mention a third reason, but this one is not special to the teacher of listening. In my opinion "good listening" is a desirable trait of a "good" teacher, because it is quite often true that a classroom is a place where emotions run high. If the teacher can respond to those emotions in ways that reduce their intensity s/he will be going a long way in providing a safe atmosphere in which to explore the subject matter.

NOTES

[1]Richard D. Halley, "Toward an Integration of the Unitary Skill-Subskills Controversy in Listening," Paper read at the Eastern Communication Association Convention, 1975. See also, Richard D. Halley, "Handout for Workshop on Teaching Listening," Eastern Communication Association Convention, 1976, and Richard D. Halley, "Some Suggestions for Teaching Listening," *The Speech Teacher*, XXIV (1975), 386-389.

[2]Carl H. Weaver, "An Evaluation of a Method of Teaching Listening," HEW Report, 1972.

[3]Neville Moray, "A Data Base for Listening Research," in *Attention and Performance V*, ed. P.M.A. Rabbitt and S. Dornic (New York, 1975).

[4]Carl R. Rogers, *On Becoming a Person* (Boston, 1961).

[5]Herbert R. Adams and William R. Rogers, *Project Listening* (Boston, 1974).

[6]Thomas Gordon, *P.E.T.: Parent Effectiveness Training* (New York, 1970).

[7]Robert R. Carkhuff and Richard M. Pierce, *Trainers Guide–The Art of Helping: An Introduction to Life Skills* (Amherst, Mass, 1975).

[8]Ella A. Erway, *Listening: A Programmed Approach* (New York, 1969).

[9]Carl H. Weaver, *Human Listening: Processes and Behavior* (Indianapolis, 1972).

A RECEIVER BASED APPROACH TO THE BASIC SPEECH COURSE

CARL A. DALLINGER

The rationale for a receiver based approach to a course in speech communication is reasonably obvious. Among the communicative activities in which we engage, listening consumes the greatest proportion of time. Studies indicate that 70 per cent of our waking day is spent in some form of communication and that 42 to 57 per cent of that communicative time is spent in listening, compared to 32 per cent in talking, 15 per cent in reading, and 11 per cent in writing.[1] Television sets in the United States are turned on an average of six hours per day.[2] By the time a student graduates from high school he/she will have spent almost twice as many hours watching television as he/she will have spent in school classes.[3] We live in a world dominated by media—television, radio, film, newspapers, magazines, books, bulk mailings. We are constantly bombarded by messages and appeals which we process in some way for good or ill. Listening, the receiving of communication from a myriad of sources is an overwhelming factor in our lives.

More immediately, talking and listening are the principal means by which the educational enterprise is carried on. In most classes students spend at least 50 per cent of their time listening, in some classes as high as 97 per cent of their time.[4] That this system of education is not very efficient is well known, for most of us retain only about 25 per cent of what we hear.[5] Surely talking and listening are necessary parts of teaching and learning, but an increase in what is gained from these essential educational tools would be desirable.

One of the fundamental aims of education is to equip students to cope more effectively with the world in which they live. To be vocationally competent is one essential means of survival, and the ability to receive and carry out instructions and respond effectively to other kinds of communication is an inherent part of almost all occupations. Not only should we be equipped to engage in some useful occupation, but we should also be able to "take in" the world in which we live, to evaluate what we receive from it, to utilize well what is to be learned from it, to appreciate and enjoy that which is worthwhile. A well designed receiver based approach to a speech communication course makes a major contribution to the achievement of these important educational objectives.

Quite clearly, then, the overwhelming objective of a receiver based approach to a course in speech communication is to develop more competent receivers of communication. Traditionally speech communication training has concentrated on speech construction and presentation. The value of such training cannot be questioned. But our study of the communication process has led us to understand the importance of the role of the receiver as well as the sender of messages, and that success or failure of communication is as much the responsibility of the listener as the speaker. Efforts to improve listener competency fall into two categories, (a) acquisition of knowledge about listening and the reception of communication, and (b) improved ability to listen, to receive and process what we receive through various means and modes of communication. Spelling out in more detail these objectives will give some indication of the units of instruction that might be included in a receiver oriented course.

In the area of knowledge about communication the following objectives seem relevant. The student should know:

1. the communication process and the functions of receivers in that process.
2. the barriers to communication, particularly as they relate to and affect the reception of communication.
3. the common patterns in which messages are organized in order to facilitate the structuring of messages we receive.
4. the ways language is utilized effectively in phrasing messages and the relationship of language to meaning.
5. how messages are communicated nonverbally.
6. the principles and modes of reasoning, including fallacies and propaganda devices, as a basis of evaluating messages.
7. the components of source credibility and ways of evaluating this aspect of communication.
8. the various levels of human needs and motivations and how they are employed in appealing to receivers of communication.
9. the various types and levels of listening–phatic, informational, critical, appreciative.
10. the function and importance of listening in vocations and other facets of human interaction.
11. the ways in which an individual selectively attends to, perceives, filters, responds to messages received.
12. the relationship of reception of communication to self-concept and self-disclosure.
13. the patterns in which communication occurs–reference to opinion leaders, two-step flow, and similar patterns.

Competencies a receiver based approach to a speech communication course should attempt to develop in students properly include:

1. Attitudes which facilitate effective listening, such as openmindedness, tolerance rather than intolerance, respect rather than disrespect for the opinions and rights of others, suspended rather than snap judgment.

2. The ability to retain and recall important information, directions, procedures.
3. The ability to organize information and ideas.
4. Language facility which will enable the receiver to process the denotative, connotative, and semantic meanings of verbal messages.
5. The ability to assess the logical validity, to identify, and refute fallacies in messages.
6. The ability to read and interpret the meaning of nonverbal cues.
7. The ability to assess the credibility of sources of communication.
8. The ability to assess and respond appropriately to motivational appeals employed in various forms of communication.
9. The ability to adapt to various listening levels–phatic, informational, critical, appreciative.
10. The ability to analyze, assess, respond appropriately to the biases in different media.
11. The ability to draw valid inferences and conclusions from messages received.
12. The ability to encode appropriate responses to communications received.
13. The ability to cope with various barriers to good listening.
14. Adapting listening-receiving behavior to various communicative settings–interpersonal, group, public, media.

To implement these objectives, a speech communication course focusing on the receiver might well be built around the following topics or units of instruction.

A. Understanding the Communication Process.

Particular emphasis should be on the receiver and might well include:

1. Analysis of the communication process through the use of models.
2. The functions of the participants in communication, emphasizing the responsibilities of receivers.
3. Listening as an active, not a passive process.
4. Barriers to communication, particularly as they affect and arise within receivers.
5. The various levels at which we communicate–phatic, informational, critical, appreciative.

B. Evaluation of Listening - Receiver Abilities.

Essentially this unit of instruction focuses on the testing of listening skills through the use of listening programs, standardized tests, or listening exercises and tests prepared by the instructor. Information from research about how effectively we listen might be included in this unit.

C. Barriers to Effective Listening and Some Techniques for Overcoming Them.

Here the bad habits of listening and the recommendations for overcoming them presented by Ralph Nichols and others might well be the focus of this topic.[6]

D. Increasing Language Competency.

Expansion of vocabulary to increase ability to understand verbal messages, command of the semantic aspects of language to better understand and cope with communication is the central thrust of this unit.

E. Nonverbal Aspects of Communication.

How we communicate nonverbally, reading and interpreting nonverbal cues are topics of central importance in this unit.

F. The Perception and Processing of Messages.

Selective exposure, selective perception, selective filtering, influence of reference groups are aspects of the communication process emphasized in this segment of the course.

G. Understanding and Coping with Motivational Appeals.

Understanding the components of source credibility and the types of emotional appeals, the ways they are employed in various types of communication, criteria for assessing the validity of these appeals and responding appropriately to them constitute the elements of importance in this facet of the course.

H. Assessing Logical Appeals and Fallacies.

A working knowledge of the common forms of reasoning we employ, the kinds of fallacies we encounter with reasonable frequency, the ability to assess the validity or fallaciousness of the logical appeals to which we are subjected, and the setting of criteria by which to decide when we should or should not be persuaded are focal points of this phase of the course.

I. Adapting Listening Abilities to Various Communicative Settings.

Listening in interpersonal, group, speaker to audience, radio, television, film, and other mass media settings are aspects of communication to be emphasized.

J. Assessing the Biases of Sources of Communication.

Study of factors of ownership, sources of income, types of audiences to which they appeal, federal regulations and controls, editorial policies, and other conditions that bias sources of communication, particularly mass media, in order to provide listeners with a background for assessing the communications they receive is the thrust of this topic.

These units of instruction need not be followed in the order in which they are presented. Nor are they exhaustive. Instructors should structure their courses in the way that best suits their circumstances including those units of instruction they deem appropriate in the order they prefer. All that has been attempted here is a suggestion of topics that might well be included in a receiver based approach to a speech communication course, with a brief summary of what would be addressed appropriately under each topic.

At first glance it might appear that in a receiver based approach to a speech communication course the performance activities in which students engage would be confined to listening exercises. Not so. The differences between a receiver based approach and other speech communication courses may lie more in the subject matter dealt with in performance activities than

in radically different kinds of assignments. A combination of listening and speaking is quite appropriate, if not essential. Listening and speaking is a reciprocal relationship and it is essential that receivers of communication be called upon to articulate, to make explicit in some way their responses if they are to improve. What follows are brief explanations of some exercises and assignments that implement the objectives and units of instruction which have been presented.

A. Use of listening tests and exercices are obvious kinds of activities for a receiver oriented course. The *Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension test*[7] and the *Sequential Tests of Educational Progress*[8] on listening are two widely used tests. In addition the Xerox Corporation[9] and Dun and Bradstreet[10] have listening programs, although they are quite expensive. Using a tape recorder, an instructor can readily produce listening tests and exercises based on stories, instructions, expository material of all sorts. These can be evaluated by short multiple choice tests or other types of response instruments. Using such activities and instruments periodically through a course not only is a good teaching method, but is also a feasible way of evaluating improvement in listening ability.

B. In coordination with the study of the communication process the following exercises might be employed.

1. To emphasize the importance of feedback and accurate listening, small group discussions could be assigned in which it is required that the participants restate or summarize accurately the point of view or the information presented by other members of the group before they are permitted to express their responses to those points of view or information.
2. To focus on the influence of "noise" in communication, a class might be divided into two or three groups and each group be given the same quiz but under a different "noise" condition. One group might take the quiz with some kind of music playing; another with distracting talking or a T.V. set playing in the background; the third under a particularly stressful set of conditions, such as excessive importance being attached to the grade, or a similar kind of pressure being applied.
3. The importance of channels in receiving communication can be emphasized by any number of communication games that control the means of communication available to the participants. "One Way-Two Way Communication" to be found in *A Handbook of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training* by J. William Pfeiffer and John E. Jones,[11] which opens up additional channels of communication as the exercise proceeds, is an example of such a game.
4. To focus on the importance of context in the communication of information and ideas, similar speeches might be presented in two different settings: (1) in the speech classroom where limited equipment and visual aids are available, (2) in the setting–auto shop, gymnasium, music room, on the stage, etc.–where the

essential equipment is available. Quizzing over the amount of information retained in the two different types of settings might be included in the assignment.

C. Closemindedness and the barrier to listening of a premature dismissal of a subject as uninteresting might be exemplified by having each student in the class prepare and present just the introduction to a speech. At the conclusion of each introduction each member of the class would indicate whether he/she would like to hear the rest of the speech and why. Do the responses indicate premature dismissal of subjects as uninteresting?

D. "Copping out" on listening to difficult material can readily be experienced and evaluated by exercices which present increasingly difficult material in subject matter and vocabulary, then quizzing the students over the material presented. These exercises can also be used for expanding the language competence of receivers of communication.

E. The semantic impact of language on receivers can be experienced by having the students participate in small group discussions in which one student in each group, unknown to the other students, is given the role of employing a certain type of language, such as "labeling" the comments of the other participants. The impact of this language behavior on the attitudes and participation of the other students in the discussion can then be evaluated.

F. Following instructions can be implemented by having the students present speeches which require the members of the class to follow a procedure or produce a product (e.g. solving a mathematical problem, making an artificial flower from a kleenex, etc.) The ability to follow as well as give instructions is concretely demonstrated.

G. Reading and interpreting nonverbal cues might be demonstrated a number of ways. Two possible assignments might be:

1. Have the students videotape a speech outside of class without the other members of the class present. First, play the speeches in class with the sound track off. Have the class members indicate the message they receive without the sound. Then play the speeches with the sound track on and judge whether the reading of the nonverbal cues in the first presentation were confirmed when the speech was heard as well as seen. If not, why not?
2. In a round of argumentative-persuasive speeches instruct one-fourth to one-third of the class to present a speech which runs counter to their true attitude on the subject. The class in general should not know which students receive this instruction. When the speeches are presented, each member of the class is to judge whether or not the speaker is speaking congruently with his conviction on the topic and indicate what in the presentation stimulated his/her judgment. At the conclusion of the speeches class judgments will be checked against the instructions given the speakers to test how well the class members were able to detect insincerity in the speakers.

H. Assessing motivational and logical appeals can be addressed by having the students select a product that is advertised on the radio, television, in newspapers and magazines. Each student will present a speech giving an exposition of the advertisements, audio and/or video taping the ad and displaying printed ads as part of his/her presentation. Then the ads are to be analyzed for the motivational and logical appeals used. The final step is to present and refute the logical and motivational fallacies employed.

I. Adapting our reception of communication to various settings might be implemented by having the students present speeches based upon interviews and observation. A place or situation in the school (e.g. conditions in the lunchroom, problem in the student council) or in the community (e.g. vandalism in the park, handling of traffic violators) would be selected by each student. Preparation for the speech would include first hand observation and interviewing knowledgeable people on the topic. The speech would include the accurate reporting of the observations and the interviews, the drawing of conclusions from this information, and the making of recommendations within the limits of the data and inferences presented. Comments on their experiences in interviewing could be included in the presentations.

J. Selective perception and response as phenomena in the reception of and response to communication might be demonstrated in a series of presentations based on observation. Two or three students would attend the same event and present a speech based on their independent observations and experiences in that event. For example, a catholic, a protestant, and a jewish student might all attend the same religious service and speak on their observations of and reactions to that experience. A male and a female student might attend the same athletic event and speak on their reaction to that event. A male and a female student might present speeches based on their observation of the same women's dress shop or men's clothing store. Other situations could be defined. The differences in the reports would be the focal point of the assignment.

K. Bias in sources of messages, the ways sources function as gatekeepers in what we have communicated to us could be revealed in a series of speeches based on various aspects of mass media. For example a particular magazine like *Time, Cosmopolitan, Redbook* could be selected and by an analysis of its format, the kinds of ads and stories it carries, its circulation, and the like, the speaker would identify its biases and the audience to which it is directed. A similar investigation of a radio station or network, a television station or network, a newspaper could be the bases of speeches.

These assignments are not presented as *the* definitive ways to improve the receiver skills of students. They have been offered only as suggested activities that relate listening to speaking and at the same time focus on a receiver oriented approach to a speech communication course. Hopefully, as a result of participation in these and similar assignments students will improve

both their listening and speaking abilities and will emerge from such a course better able to process the multiplicity of messages that infringe upon them daily. In an effort to assess what the students have learned instructors might well consider giving tests orally, in which the instructions and questions are recorded and played on audio tape instead of being distributed in dittoed form. Answer sheets could be duplicated to obtain the responses of the students to the orally presented questions. This technique might make quizzes and tests a learning experience consistent with a receiver oriented course.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Larry L. Barker, *Listening Behavior.* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1971) p. 3.

[2]A. C. Nielsen Company. *Television 1976.* (Northbrook, Illinois), p. 8.

[3]*Television 1976,* p. 11. Children between the ages of two and five watch television an average of 26:31 hours per week; children six to eleven 25:49 hours per week, male teens 22:41 and female teens 21:21 hours per week. A child will spend about 10,800 hours in class by the time he/she graduates from high school. By that same stage in his/her life the average child will have spent about 18,600 hours watching television.

[4]Barker, p. 4.

[5]Ralph G. Nichols and Thomas R. Lewis, *Listening and Speaking.* (Dubuque, Iowa, 1954), p. 4.

[6]*Nichols,* chap. 2.

[7]James I. Brown and G. Robert Carlsen, *Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test.* (The Psychological Corporation, 757 Third Ave., New York, N. Y. 10017).

[8]"Sequential Tests of Education Progress: Listening," Cooperative Test Division, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, N. J., 1957.

[9]"Effective Listening," A Xerox Management in Action Program, New York: Xerox Corp., 1965.

[10]"Dr. Ralph G. Nichols Complete Course in Listening," New York: Dun and Bradstreet, 1968.

[11]J. William Pfeiffer and John E. Jones, *A Handbook of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training,* Vol. 1 (Iowa City, Iowa, 1970), pp. 13-17.

AN EDITORIAL STATEMENT ON THE TEACHING OF LISTENING

If, as teachers of Speech & Theatre, we are to accept the responsibilities of our chosen profession, then I believe we should devote more time to the teaching of listening. In doing so, however, we should recognize the difference between a listener receiving information and a listener evaluating that information. Although I believe that to teach the one without the other would be a mistake, I am here concerned only with one of the ways we as teachers can help our students learn to evaluate the information they do receive. I am here concerned only with the teaching of the material fallacies.

Although relatively few speakers use invalid reasoning, a relatively large number of speakers seem to base their reasoning on premises which cannot be accepted by the audience on the basis of their past experiences and therefore on premises which ought not to have been used. While Aristotle in his treatise, *The Sophistical Elenchi*, was the first to attempt to systematize the material fallacies, numerous attempts have been made since then to re-classify them. I believe that as teachers of Speech & Theatre we should concern ourselves primarily with those which today seem to be used most often. I suggest that we help our students learn that speakers will at times attempt to ignore, tc confuse, to invent, or to simplify the issue under discussion.

IGNORING THE ISSUE *(IGNORATIO ELENCHI)*

To exemplify the different ways in which speakers have in the past attempted to ignore the issue under discussion, I suggest that we get our students to look at political activities and at television commercials. They should rather easily be able to find examples of a speaker ignoring the issue by appealing to prejudices, to desires, to reverences, to ignorance, to fears, to compassions.

Ask your students how often they have heard speakers ignoring the issue by appealing to prejudices. To do so, is of course, to use the material fallacy, *ad hominem.* Ask your students to look at the year 1952, when the issue under discussion was whether Adlai Stevenson or Dwight David Eisenhower was better qualified to be President of the United States. Ignoring the issue, some people would have had us believe that Eisenhower should be elected not necessarily because he was better qualified, but because Stevenson was divorced. Ask them to look at the year 1960, when the issue under discussion was whether John F. Kennedy or Richard M. Nixon was better qualified to be President of the United States. Ignoring the issue, some people would have

had us believe that Nixon should be elected not necessarily because he was better qualified, but because Kennedy was a Catholic.

Ask your students how often they have heard speakers ignoring the issue by appealing to desires. Examples of the material fallacy *ad populum* can be readily found on both television and in politics. Ask your students to look at the attempts to sell aftershave lotions. Ask them to determine the purpose for using aftershave lotion and then ask them to determine how television trys to get us to buy it. Ask them how often they have seen commercials attempting to sell a product because of the speed with which it heals cuts on our faces and how often because of the magical way in which it transforms an ordinary male into one women find irresistible. Ask them also to look at the times when presidential candidates ignore the issue under discussion and attempt to appeal to our desires.

Ask your students how often they have heard speakers ignoring the issue by appealing to reverences. To help them find examples of the material fallacy, *ad verecundiam*, ask them to look at both politics and education. Ask them to look at the *Congressional Record* when the issue under discussion is whether the United States should sign a treaty with another country. Ask them to discover how often a Senator argues that we should not, not necessarily because it would be a poor treaty, but because George Washington in his Farewell Address of 1796 warned that the United States should avoid entangling alliances. We should get our students to develop as good listeners to the point that they will not allow their reverence for our founding fathers to interfere with their ability to evaluate an argument. Neither in politics nor in education should they do so, when as teachers we are perhaps too often guilty of asking our students to accept something as true simply because it appears in a text-book.

Ask your students how often they have heard speakers ignoring the issue by appealing to ignorance. To help your students understand the nature of the *ad ignorantiam* material fallacy, ask them to look at the search for communists in this country during the early 1950's, when thousands of men and women found themselves black-listed simply because they could not prove they were not communists. Have them look also at the argument that God is dead if we cannot prove that he is alive. Ask them also, how often they have received a failing grade on an examination simply because they could not prove to their teacher that they had not cheated.

Ask your students how often they have heard speakers ignoring the issue by appealing to fears. They should have little trouble in finding examples for the material fallacy, *ad baculum*. Ask them how often a teacher has persuaded them to complete an assignment not necessarily because it would benefit them but because they would fail the course if they did not complete the assignment. Ask them also how often their parents have persuaded them not to do something not because it was necessarily harmful but because their parents would take away the family car if they did not do as they were told.

Ask your students how often they have heard speakers ignoring the issue by appealing to compassions. The material fallacy *ad misericordiam* is frequently used. Ask your students how often they have attempted to get a grade higher than the one they earned on the basis of this fallacy. How many

times has a football player received a passing grade not because he earned it but because he would not be allowed to play in a game if he did not receive one? How many times have tears been used as an attempt to get a higher grade ?

CONFUSING THE ISSUE *(PETITIO PRINCIPII)*

Yet, we should get our students to the point where they realize that speakers not only attempt to ignore the issue under discussion but at times also attempt to confuse the issue. We should help our students learn to reject arguments when an attempt is made to argue in a circle, to ask a double question, to rotate a question.

Confusing the issue by arguing in a circle is traditionally called *circulus in probando.* Ask your students how often they have heard arguments against integrated housing that were based upon this particular fallacy. Ask them how often they have heard others argue that the proof that Blacks destroy property values is because so many of them live in slums and then argue that the reason they live in slums is because they destroy property values. Ask them also how often they have heard others argue that the proof that Blacks are lazy is that so many of them are unemployed and then argue that the reason so many of them are unemployed is that they are lazy.

Confusing the issue by asking a double question is traditionally called *plurium interrogationum.* Ask your students to consider how often George Wallace must have been asked: "Are you still a racist?" Whatever answer he gave to the question he was still guilty. Ask your students if this is not the same fallacy as when a reporter asked President Johnson whether the United States had stopped needlessly killing innocent children in Vietnam. If President Johnson had answered yes to the question then he admitted that we had needlessly killed innocent children in the past. If he answered no to the question then he admitted that we were still killing innocent children. In either case, the speaker was attempting to confuse the issue under discussion by using a proposition which contained more than one question.

Ask your students how often they have heard speakers attempt to confuse the issue under discussion by rotating the question. An example of the material fallacy *tu quoque* happened in 1967 when the Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations argued that the Syrians had broken the United Nations truce. The Syrian Ambassador, without either admitting or denying that his country had done so, argued that Israel had broken the United Nations truce.

INVENTING THE ISSUE *(POST HOC ERGO PROPTER HOC)*

Ask your students how often they have heard speakers argue that because one event preceded another that the first was the cause of the second. Ask them to consider the argument that because Democrats were in office when World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War started that the Democrats caused the wars. Have them consider also the

argument that because the Republicans were in office before every depression since the end of World War I, that the Republicans caused the depressions. Those who use those arguments are using fallacies just as those who argue that because heroin users first used marijuana that using marijuana will cause people to use heroin.

SIMPLIFYING THE ISSUE *(SECUNDUM QUID)*

Finally, ask your students how often they have heard speakers attempt to reach a general conclusion on the basis of too few examples. Ask them how often they have heard the argument that all Jews are rich, all Irish have bad tempers, all Blacks are ignorant, all Hollanders are stubborn, all professors are intelligent. Help your students learn not to accept universal propositions when human beings are included within them. Get them to the point that whenever another attempts to reach a general conclusion about human beings that they ask them if they have met all of a given group of people. If they have not, then they should not refer to an entire group. Indeed, if they have not met one more than half of an entire group, they cannot refer even to most of the group. About all they can do is to refer to some of the group.

To be sure, there are many ways of helping our students to learn to evaluate the information they receive from others. An understanding of the nature of material fallacies is only one way. An understanding of the nature of the formal fallacies and general semantics are others. What method or methods we use is not important. What is important is that we attempt to provide some method to enable those in our classes to better evaluate the seemingly constant quantity of information that is thrown at them. By doing so, we will hopefully not only help them resist the efforts of others to persuade them but also provide them with a value system that will limit what they as speakers attempt to do to others.

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